

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5803

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Technology, Energy & Communications

**Title:** An act relating to internet safety.

**Brief Description:** Promoting internet safety.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Weinstein, Berkey, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Franklin, Schmidt, Thibaudeau, Eide, Kline, Keiser, Regala, Jacobsen and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Technology, Energy & Communications: 3/29/05 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill**  
**(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Requires the Washington State School Safety Center Advisory Committee to develop and distribute a pamphlet to promote internet safety.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Crouse, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ericks, Hudgins, Nixon, P. Sullivan, Sump, Takko and Wallace.

**Staff:** Kara Durbin (786-7133).

**Background:**

According to an internet safety bulletin released by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, nearly 30 million children used the internet in 2002.

In an effort to promote internet safety, the Washington State Attorney General's Office (AGO) maintains a web site called SafetyNet. SafetyNet provides tips to consumers, parents, and children about how to use the internet in a safer manner. In addition to the web site, the AGO as part of SafetyNet is working on outreach in schools and communities to inform children, parents and educators about ways to protect children online.

The Washington State School Safety Center (Center) was established as part of the 2001-03 operating budget. The purpose of the Center is to disseminate successful models of school safety plans and cooperative efforts, provide assistance to schools to establish plans, provide

incident reports, coordinate school safety activities, review and approve manuals and curricula, and develop and maintain a school safety information web site.

The Washington State School Safety Center Advisory Committee is maintained within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and includes representation from educators, classified staff, principals, superintendents, administrators, and law enforcement. The purpose of the advisory committee is to advise OSPI, and to support and assist in the implementation of the work performed by the Center, as well as support efforts for increased academic achievement by students.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

In reviewing the issue of internet safety and school age children, the Legislature makes the following findings:

1. Online communications are increasingly common among teenagers.
2. One of the biggest dangers to the personal safety of children is getting together or meeting someone whom they first met online.
3. Teenagers ages 12 through 19 are the most victimized segment of the population.
4. Of youth ages 10 to 17 who use the internet regularly, approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the internet.
5. Children can be protected by teaching both parents and children how to protect themselves while using the internet.

The Washington State School Safety Center Advisory Committee must develop and distribute a pamphlet to promote internet safety for children in grades seven through 12. The pamphlet must be posted on the OSPI web site. To the extent that funds are available, the pamphlet must also be distributed in schools throughout the state and in other areas accessible to youth, such as libraries and community centers.

An appropriation of \$40,000 is made from the General Fund to the OSPI for purposes of developing and distributing the pamphlet.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The amended bill makes a technical change to the name of the advisory committee to reflect the full name of the committee.

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**Appropriation:** The sum of \$40,000.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** The Parent-Teacher Association strongly supports this bill. We are seeing an explosion in the number of children using the internet. Children use the internet for entertainment. We envision this brochure as providing for a family plan for internet use, including teaching parents how to use filters.

This is a very important bill. Parents and children need to be educated about how to use the internet safely. It is important that parents know what their children are doing when they use the internet. If parents and children are educated, they can protect themselves.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Mary Kenfield, State Parent-Teacher Association; and Denise Fitch, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.